

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-52. (Cancelled)

53. (Currently Amended) A floorboard comprising:

connecting means integrated with the floorboard and adapted to connect a first edge of the floorboard with a second edge of an essentially identical floorboard, wherein upper joint edges of said floorboard and said essentially identical floorboard in a connected state define a vertical plane,

said connecting means adapted to connect said floorboard with said essentially identical floorboard in at least a horizontal direction perpendicular to said vertical plane,

said connecting means comprising a locking strip which projects from said vertical plane and carries a locking element which is adapted to cooperate, in said connected state, with a downward open locking groove of said essentially identical floorboard,

said locking strip is a separate part which is mechanically fixed to the floorboard in said horizontal direction and a vertical direction,

wherein said locking strip is mechanically fixed to the floorboard at a joint by snapping-in, inward angling, or frictional forces,

said locking strip comprising a strip tongue,

said locking strip adapted for connecting the floorboard with the essentially identical floorboard by at least inward angling, such that when the second edge is pressed against an upper part of the first edge and is then angled down, the locking element can enter the locking groove,

wherein the joint comprises a strip groove adapted to receive the strip tongue and wherein the ~~joint~~ strip groove is open in the horizontal direction,

the strip groove adapted for retaining the strip tongue in the strip groove when the strip groove is arranged in connection to the strip tongue.

54. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 53, wherein said connecting means are adapted for connecting the floorboard with the essentially identical floorboard by snapping-in in an essentially horizontal direction.

55. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 53, wherein said connecting means are adapted for disconnecting said floorboard from said essentially identical floorboard by an angular motion in a direction opposite to a direction of the inward angling.

56. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 53, further comprising:

a tongue groove for connecting the floorboard to said essentially identical floorboard in a vertical direction perpendicular to a principal plane of the floorboard, wherein the tongue groove is adapted for receiving a tongue arranged on said essentially identical floorboard, wherein at least one surface of said tongue groove is said locking strip.

57. (Currently Amended) The floorboard as claimed in claim 56, further comprising:

a locking surface arranged in said ~~locking~~ strip groove and adapted to cooperate with a locking surface arranged on said locking strip.

58. (Currently Amended) The floorboard as claimed in claim 57, wherein said locking surface arranged in the ~~locking~~ strip groove is arranged on a lower lip which defines said strip groove, and wherein said locking surface arranged on the locking strip is arranged on a lower surface of said locking strip.

59. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 53, wherein the locking strip is detachable from said floorboard by an angular motion in a direction opposite to a direction of the inward angling.

60. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 56, wherein the locking strip is inserted into said strip groove arranged in an edge portion of said

floorboard, wherein the locking strip is held in place in said horizontal direction by frictional forces.

61. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 56, wherein the locking strip is inserted into said strip groove arranged in an edge portion of said floorboard, wherein the locking strip is held in place in said horizontal direction by frictional forces and glue.

62. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 53, wherein the locking strip is made of essentially wood-based material.

63. (Currently Amended) The floorboard as claimed in claim ~~[[53]]~~ 62, wherein said wood-based material is selected from the group consisting of pure wood, particle board, plywood, HDF, MDF and compact laminate.

64. (Currently Amended) The floorboard as claimed in claim ~~[[53]]~~ 62, wherein said wood-based material is impregnated ~~and/or~~ or coated with a property-improving agent.

65. (Currently Amended) The floorboard as claimed in claim ~~[[53]]~~ 62, wherein said wood-based material comprises a curing polymer material.

66. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 53, wherein the floorboard is quadrilateral and, along at least two mutually perpendicular edge portions, has first and second sets of connecting means.

67. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 66, wherein said first set of connecting means is arranged on a short side of the floorboard and said second set of connecting means is arranged on a long side of the floorboard, said first set of connecting means differing from said second set of connecting means in terms of material property or material composition.

68. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 67, wherein a locking strip included in said first set of connecting means differs in terms of material property or material composition from a locking strip included in said second set of connecting means.

69. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 68, wherein the locking strip included in said first set of connecting means has higher strength than the locking strip included in said second set of connecting means.

70. (Withdrawn) A method for manufacturing a floorboard, the floorboard comprising connecting means integrated with the floorboard and adapted to connect the floorboard with an essentially identical floorboard,

wherein upper joint edges of said floorboard and said essentially identical floorboard in a connected state define a vertical plane,

said connecting means adapted to connect said floorboard with said essentially identical floorboard in at least a horizontal direction perpendicular to said vertical plane,

said connecting means comprising a locking strip which projects from said vertical plane and carries a locking element which cooperates, in said connected state, with a downward open locking groove of said essentially identical floorboard, the method comprising:

forming the locking strip as a separate part; and

mechanically fixing the locking strip to the floorboard in both the horizontal direction and a vertical direction at a joint which is operable by snapping-in, inward angling, or frictional forces,

the locking strip adapted for connecting the floorboard with the essentially identical floorboard by at least inward angling,

said locking strip comprising a strip tongue,

wherein the joint comprises a strip groove adapted to receive the strip tongue and wherein the joint is open in the horizontal direction,

the strip groove adapted for retaining the strip tongue in the strip groove when the strip groove is arranged in connection to the strip tongue.

71. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 70, further comprising:
fixing the locking strip to the floorboard by snapping-in in an essentially
horizontal direction.

72. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 70, further comprising:
fixing the locking strip to the floorboard by inward angling.

73. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 70, further comprising:
inserting the locking strip into a strip groove arranged in an edge portion of
said floorboard, such that the locking strip is held in place in said horizontal direction
by frictional forces.

74. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 70, further comprising:
inserting the locking strip into a strip groove arranged in an edge portion of
said floorboard, such that the locking strip is held in place in said horizontal direction
by frictional forces and glue.

75. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 71, wherein said locking
strip is included in a strip blank comprising at least two essentially identical locking
strips, the locking strip being engaged with the floorboard, and said locking strip
being separated from said strip blank.

76. (Currently Amended) A floorboard comprising:
connectors integrated with the floorboard and adapted to connect a first edge
of the floorboard with a second edge of an essentially identical floorboard,
wherein upper joint edges of said floorboard and said essentially identical
floorboard in a connected state define a vertical plane,
said connectors adapted to connect said floorboard with said essentially iden-
tical floorboard in at least a horizontal direction perpendicular to said vertical plane,
said connectors comprising a locking strip which projects from said vertical
plane and carries a locking element which is adapted to cooperate, in said
connected state, with a downward open locking groove of said essentially identical
floorboard,

said locking strip is a separate part which is mechanically fixed to the floorboard in said horizontal direction and a vertical direction,

wherein said locking strip is mechanically fixed to the floorboard at a joint by snapping-in, inward angling, or frictional forces,

said locking strip comprising a strip tongue,

said locking strip adapted for connecting the floorboard with the essentially identical floorboard by at least inward angling, such that when the second edge is pressed against an upper part of the first edge and is then angled down, the locking element can enter the locking groove.

wherein the joint comprises a strip groove adapted to receive the strip tongue and wherein the joint ~~strip groove~~ strip groove is open in the horizontal direction,

the strip groove adapted for retaining the strip tongue in the strip groove when the strip groove is arranged in connection to the strip tongue.

77. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 76, wherein said connectors are adapted for connecting the floorboard with the essentially identical floorboard by snapping-in in an essentially horizontal direction.

78. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 76, wherein said connectors are adapted for disconnecting said floorboard from said essentially identical floorboard by an angular motion in a direction opposite to a direction of the inward angling.

79. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 76, further comprising:

a tongue groove for connecting the floorboard to said essentially identical floorboard in a vertical direction perpendicular to a principal plane of the floorboard,

wherein the tongue groove is adapted for receiving a tongue arranged on said essentially identical floorboard,

wherein at least one surface of said tongue groove is said locking strip.

80. (Currently Amended) The floorboard as claimed in claim 79, further comprising:

a locking surface arranged in said ~~locking~~ strip groove and adapted to cooperate with a locking surface arranged on said locking strip.

81. (Currently Amended) The floorboard as claimed in claim 80, wherein said ~~locking~~ strip surface arranged in the locking groove is arranged on a lower lip which defines said strip groove, and wherein said locking surface arranged on the locking strip is arranged on a lower surface of said locking strip.

82. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 76, wherein the locking strip is detachable from said floorboard by an angular motion in a direction opposite to a direction of the inward angling.

83. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 79, wherein the locking strip is inserted into said strip groove arranged in an edge portion of said floorboard, wherein the locking strip is held in place in said horizontal direction by frictional forces.

84. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 79, wherein the locking strip is inserted into said strip groove arranged in an edge portion of said floorboard, wherein the locking strip is held in place in said horizontal direction by frictional forces and glue.

85. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 76, wherein the locking strip is made of essentially wood-based material.

86. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 85, wherein said wood-based material is selected from the group consisting of pure wood, particle board, plywood, HDF, MDF and compact laminate.

87. (Currently Amended) The floorboard as claimed in claim 85, wherein said wood-based material is impregnated ~~and/or~~ or coated with a property-improving agent.

88. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 85, wherein said wood-based material comprises a curing polymer material.

89. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 76, wherein the floorboard is quadrilateral and, along at least two mutually perpendicular edge portions, has first and second sets of connectors.

90. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 89, wherein said first set of connectors is arranged on a short side of the floorboard and said second set of connectors is arranged on a long side of the floorboard, said first set of connectors differing from said second set of connectors in terms of material property or material composition.

91. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 90, wherein a locking strip included in said first set of connectors differs in terms of material property or material composition from a locking strip included in said second set of connectors.

92. (Previously Presented) The floorboard as claimed in claim 91, wherein the locking strip included in said first set of connectors has higher strength than the locking strip included in said second set of connectors.

93. (Withdrawn) A method for manufacturing a floorboard, the floorboard comprising connectors integrated with the floorboard and adapted to connect the floorboard with an essentially identical floorboard,

wherein upper joint edges of said floorboard and said essentially identical floorboard in a connected state define a vertical plane,

said connectors adapted to connect said floorboard with said essentially identical floorboard in at least a horizontal direction perpendicular to said vertical plane,

said connectors comprising a locking strip which projects from said vertical plane and carries a locking element which cooperates, in said connected state, with a downward open locking groove of said essentially identical floorboard, the method comprising:

forming the locking strip as a separate part; and
mechanically fixing the locking strip to the floorboard in both the horizontal direction and a vertical direction at a joint which is operable by snapping-in, inward angling, or frictional forces,
the locking strip adapted for connecting the floorboard with the essentially identical floorboard by at least inward angling,
said locking strip comprising a strip tongue,
wherein the joint comprises a strip groove adapted to receive the strip tongue and wherein the joint is open in the horizontal direction,
the strip groove adapted for retaining the strip tongue in the strip groove when the strip groove is arranged in connection to the strip tongue.

94. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 93, further comprising:
fixing the locking strip to the floorboard by snapping-in in an essentially horizontal direction.

95. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 93, further comprising:
fixing the locking strip to the floorboard by inward angling.

96. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 93, further comprising:
inserting the locking strip into a strip groove arranged in an edge portion of said floorboard, such that the locking strip is held in place in said horizontal direction by frictional forces.

97. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 93, further comprising:
inserting the locking strip into a strip groove arranged in an edge portion of said floorboard, such that the locking strip is held in place in said horizontal direction by frictional forces and glue.

98. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 94, wherein said locking strip is included in a strip blank comprising at least two essentially identical locking strips, the locking strip being engaged with the floorboard, and said locking strip being separated from said strip blank.